

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
AUSTIN DIVISION

WATERLOO SPARKLING WATER CORP., § Civil Action No. 1:21-CV-161-RP

Plaintiff,

v.

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

TREATY OAK BREWING AND
DISTILLING CO., LLC, TREATY OAK
BRANDS, LLC, TREATY OAK
OPERATIONS, LLC, TREATY OAK
HOLDINGS, LLC, SPIRITED COCKTAILS
CORPORATION, DANIEL BARNES, and
BRANDON CASON,

Defendants.

**DECLARATION OF KATHLEEN MAURELLA IN SUPPORT OF
PLAINTIFFS' MOTION FOR PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION**

1 I, Kathleen Maurella, declare:

2 1. I am the Chief Marketing Officer of Waterloo Sparkling Water (“Waterloo”). I have
3 over two decades of experience in the consumer-packaged goods (“CPG”) industry. I base this
4 declaration on facts within my personal knowledge and documents and information that I have
5 reviewed in the course of performing my job responsibilities. If called upon to testify, I could and
6 would testify competently thereto.

7 2. Waterloo was founded in 2017 and began selling its flavored sparkling water
8 beverages under the WATERLOO SPARKLING WATER® mark the same year.

9 3. Waterloo recognized early on that consumers were interested in healthy, low-calorie
10 options instead of sodas and other sugary beverages. Consumers wanted robust, rich flavors that
11 hit the spot for a carbonated beverage craving without the sugar, GMOs, artificial sweeteners, or
12 sodium included in sodas and other sugary beverages.

13 4. Incorporating these insights, Waterloo launched Waterloo Sparkling Water, a lineup
14 of sparkling beverages that feature distinct, compelling flavors along with Waterloo’s signature
15 visual identity and packaging design.

16 5. Waterloo has experienced incredible growth since its founding in 2017. In 2018,
17 Waterloo recorded \$17.3 million in sales. In 2019, Waterloo recorded \$46.4 million in sales, a
18 171% increase over the previous year. In 2020, Waterloo recorded \$79 million in sales (or over
19 270 million cans), a 72% increase over the previous year.

20 6. Today, Waterloo Sparkling Water is available in more than 15,500 retail stores
21 across the country, including major chains like Whole Foods Market, Costco, Target, Kroger,
22 Walmart, Publix, H-E-B/Central Market and others. Waterloo is also available for purchase
23 through liquor delivery platforms and e-commerce platforms.

24 7. WATERLOO SPARKLING WATER® is one of the most popular emerging
25 beverage brands in the country and has garnered national press attention and awards praising its
26 taste and quality.

Waterloo's Trademark and Trade Dress

8. On March 22, 2017, Waterloo applied to register the WATERLOO SPARKLING WATER® design mark with the United States Patent and Trademark Office ("USPTO"). The USPTO approved the application and Waterloo obtained U.S. Trademark Registration No. 5356607 on December 12, 2017.

9. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 1** is a true and correct copy of the USPTO Trademark Registration Certificate for WATERLOO SPARKLING WATER®.

10. Since 2017, Waterloo has sold hundreds of millions of cans of Waterloo Sparkling Water to customers across the country. In 2017, Waterloo Sparkling Water rolled out nationally at all Whole Foods Market locations. Waterloo was for sale in all fifty States by April 2018.

11. To my knowledge, there is not a single other sparkling beverage brand in the United States that uses the term "WATERLOO," including both alcoholic and non-alcoholic sparkling beverages.

12. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 2** is a true and correct copy of Waterloo Sparkling Water promotional materials showing the design of each of the Waterloo Sparkling Water flavor varieties.

Waterloo's Investment in WATERLOO SPARKLING WATER®

13. Over the last five years, Waterloo has invested millions of dollars to market, advertise, and grow its brand and consumer goodwill under the WATERLOO SPARKLING WATER® brand. Waterloo's total marketing budget was \$1.1 million in 2018, \$3 million in 2019, \$4 million in 2020, and is projected to be \$7.5 million in 2021.

14. Waterloo promotes and advertises Waterloo Sparkling Water via digital advertising campaigns on major digital platforms (such as Google, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), and popular websites, including those of major retailers. Today, Waterloo has millions of ad impressions on business, entertainment, and health & wellness websites.

15. Waterloo also has an active presence on its own social media platforms, where it enjoys tens of thousands of followers.

16. In 2020, social media posts featuring Waterloo Sparkling Water earned over 320 million impressions.

1 17. WATERLOO SPARKLING WATER® is enjoyed and has been praised by many
2 celebrities, including music star Justin Bieber, actor Alec Baldwin, and NBA legend Chris Bosh.
3 Attached hereto as **Exhibit 3** are true and correct copies of social media posts by Messrs. Bieber,
4 Baldwin, and Bosh touting Waterloo's products.

5 18. WATERLOO SPARKLING WATER® has garnered national press attention
6 praising its products' taste and won numerous awards, including being ranked among the top
7 sparkling water brands in the country. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 4** are true and correct copies of
8 press articles lauding Waterloo Sparkling Water.

9 19. Last year alone, the value of Waterloo's earned advertising exposure from press and
10 social media mentions was over \$11.5 million.

11 20. As a result of Waterloo's extensive marketing efforts, Waterloo Sparkling Water is
12 among the most highly recognizable sparkling water brands.

13 **Waterloo and Sparkling Cocktails**

14 21. Many of Waterloo's customers and potential customers drink sparkling water in
15 conjunction with or as an alternative to cocktails. The majority of our customers enjoy Waterloo
16 Sparkling Water with a meal, approximately 20% enjoy Waterloo Sparkling Water in place of an
17 alcoholic beverage, and more than 25% drink Waterloo Sparkling Water as a mixer with cocktails.
18 More than 55% of Waterloo customers report consuming spiked seltzers at least several times per
19 year, and in focus groups our customers have identified alcoholic seltzers as an obvious brand
20 extension for Waterloo. Indeed, consumers are more likely to use Waterloo than several of its
21 major competitors as a mixer with alcohol. Attached hereto as **Exhibits 5 and 6** are true and
22 correct copies of excerpts from July 2020 and January 2021 sparkling water consumer surveys
23 commissioned by Waterloo reflecting the statistics recited above.

24 22. Waterloo Sparkling Water appears on the same store aisles and shelves as alcoholic
25 beverages. Waterloo Sparkling Water is also available for purchase in liquor stores such as Bev
26 Mo, Spec's Wine, Spirits & Finer Foods, Goody Goody, Twin Liquors, and Go Puff and from
27 liquor home delivery platforms.

1 23. For this reason, Waterloo promotes cocktail and mocktail recipes on its social media
2 channels. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 7** are true and correct copies of social media posts promoting
3 Waterloo Sparkling Water for use in cocktails.

4 24. Waterloo often engages in cross-promotional campaigns with vodka, gin, tequila
5 and other spirit brands encouraging consumers to use Waterloo Sparkling Water to create tasty,
6 bespoke cocktails.

7 25. For example, Waterloo has partnered with Altos Tequila in a cross-promotional
8 campaign for a premium cocktail package that consists of Altos Plata Tequila and Waterloo
9 Sparkling Water. Waterloo has renewed our partnership with Altos Tequila in 2021 and will
10 continue to market and advertise its premium cocktail package. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 8** is a
11 true and correct copy of marketing materials for Waterloo's cross-promotional campaign with
12 Altos Tequila.

13 26. Waterloo has developed similar partnerships with other liquor brands, such as Grey
14 Goose vodka.

15 27. Waterloo co-sponsors events with liquor brands and partners with them to create
16 cocktails at events such as the South Beach Food Wine & Food Festival as a part of its marketing
17 strategy to promote cocktails featuring Waterloo Sparkling Water.

18 28. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 9** is a true and correct copy of marketing materials for
19 events which Waterloo served as a co-sponsor.

20 29. While Waterloo has not yet introduced its own alcoholic seltzer product, other
21 leading sparkling water brands, including Spindrift, Sparkling Ice, Topo Chico, and Polar Seltzer,
22 have launched alcoholic seltzer products, confirming that expansion into this category is natural
23 and expected among consumers.

24 30. At the same time, Waterloo Sparkling Water is also popular among many consumers
25 who cannot drink alcohol or choose not to do so. This includes families with small children,
26 teenagers, pregnant women, consumers with medical conditions, and those who do not drink
27 alcohol for other reasons.
28

Daniel Barnes's and Brandon Cason's Involvement with Waterloo

31. Daniel Barnes and Brandon Cason were early members of the Waterloo team, where Barnes worked in operations between 2017 and 2018 and Cason served as Waterloo's Chief Marketing Officer between 2017 and 2019.

32. As Waterloo's Chief Marketing Officer, Cason received information regarding Waterloo's market strategy, branding development, product development, design files, and marketing agency communications.

33. In his operations role at Waterloo, Barnes was intimately involved in the development of Waterloo's signature flavors and is privy to confidential information about Waterloo's formulation and products.

34. Waterloo terminated Barnes's employment in August 2018 and terminated Cason's employment in February 2019. Barnes and Cason are both parties to non-disclosure agreements with Waterloo protecting Waterloo's confidential information.

35. Barnes currently holds a 0.45% ownership interest in Waterloo. Cason currently holds a 1.44% ownership interest in Waterloo.

Defendants' Threatened Launch of the Infringing Products

36. Barnes is currently the CEO of Defendant Treaty Oak Brewing and Distilling Co. LLC and its affiliates including Treaty Oak Brands, LLC, Treaty Oak Operations, LLC, and Treaty Oak Holdings, LLC (together "Treaty Oak").

37. Treaty Oak has previously sold gin under the name "Waterloo No. 9 Gin" but has never used the name "Waterloo" in connection with a canned carbonated beverage.

38. Defendant Brandon Cason is currently the CEO of Spirited Cocktails, which sells alcoholic seltzer beverages under the brand name "Canteen."

39. In January 2021, Waterloo learned from a that Defendants planned to launch a line of products called "Waterloo No. 9 Gin Spritz" (the "Infringing Products").

40. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 10** is a true and correct copy of promotional materials depicting the design of the Infringing Products.

1 41. The release of the Infringing Products was imminent at the time this lawsuit was
2 filed. Defendants had begun marketing the Infringing Products to retailers.

3 42. Defendants also had obtained Certificates of Label Approval from the United States
4 Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau for the Infringing Products.

5 43. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 11** is a true and correct copy of the Application for
6 Certificate of Label Approval from the United States Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
7 for the Blossom flavor variety of the Infringing Products.

8 44. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 12** is a true and correct copy of the Application for
9 Certificate of Label Approval from the United States Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
10 for the Citrus flavor variety of the Infringing Products.

11 45. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 13** is a true and correct copy of the Application for
12 Certificate of Label Approval from the United States Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
13 for the Ruby flavor variety of the Infringing Products.

14 46. On or about February 15, 2021, Defendant Cason gave an interview to *Forbes* in
15 which he previewed the launch of the Infringing Products

16 47. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 14** is a true and correct copy of the February 15, 2021
17 *Forbes* article titled, “How Canteen Spirits CEO Brandon Cason is Shaking up the Ready-to-Drink
18 Cocktail Game.”

19 **The Infringing Products are Causing Confusion in the Marketplace**

20 48. On January 13, 2021, Waterloo was contacted by a cross-promotional liquor partner
21 to express surprise and confusion about Waterloo’s apparent expansion into alcoholic seltzer. The
22 cross-promotional partner had learned of the forthcoming “Waterloo No. 9 Botanicals Citrus Gin
23 Spritz” and other flavors and thought that Waterloo was coming out with the new product.

24 49. Attached hereto as **Exhibit 15** is a true and correct copy of an email from a cross-
25 promotional partner at Bacardi to his contact at Waterloo expressing concern that the Infringing
26 Products were associated with Waterloo: “Hey there. Quick question – are you guys doing RTD
27 Waterloo alcohol cans? This was passed to me from one of the California regional accounts.” The
28 email then listed three of Defendants’ proposed “Waterloo No. 9 Gin Spritz” flavors.

1 50. Based on my experience in the CPG industry, such reports of confusion between
2 products are rare. The fact that there was such a mix-up before the infringing products were even
3 launched to consumers indicates that they are highly likely to cause confusion on a large scale if
4 they are launched in the marketplace.

5 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the
6 foregoing is true and correct.

7
8 Dated: May 3, 2021

By:

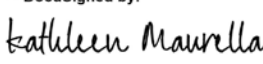
DocuSigned by:

C247758B0DA8423
Kathleen Maurella

EXHIBIT 1

United States of America

United States Patent and Trademark Office



Reg. No. 5,356,607

Registered Dec. 12, 2017

Int. Cl.: 32

Trademark

Principal Register

Sparkling Soda Water Corp. (TEXAS CORPORATION)
706 Guadalupe Street
Austin, TEXAS 78701

CLASS 32: Sparkling water

FIRST USE 8-14-2017; IN COMMERCE 8-14-2017

The mark consists of the words "WATERLOO SPARKLING WATER" appearing in fanciful font. The word "WATERLOO" appears on the first line in an upward arc in all uppercase letters. A banner with its ends waving is displayed below the word "WATERLOO" on the second line in an upward arc. The words "SPARKLING WATER" appear within the banner in an upward arc in smaller uppercase letters. A portion of the "W" in the word "WATERLOO" extends above and below the other letters in the word such that a portion of the banner is obscured.

No claim is made to the exclusive right to use the following apart from the mark as shown: "SPARKLING WATER"

SER. NO. 87-381,144, FILED 03-22-2017



Joseph Matol

Performing the Functions and Duties of the
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Intellectual Property and Director of the
United States Patent and Trademark Office

REQUIREMENTS TO MAINTAIN YOUR FEDERAL TRADEMARK REGISTRATION

WARNING: YOUR REGISTRATION WILL BE CANCELLED IF YOU DO NOT FILE THE DOCUMENTS BELOW DURING THE SPECIFIED TIME PERIODS.

Requirements in the First Ten Years*

What and When to File:

- **First Filing Deadline:** You must file a Declaration of Use (or Excusable Nonuse) between the 5th and 6th years after the registration date. See 15 U.S.C. §§1058, 1141k. If the declaration is accepted, the registration will continue in force for the remainder of the ten-year period, calculated from the registration date, unless cancelled by an order of the Commissioner for Trademarks or a federal court.
- **Second Filing Deadline:** You must file a Declaration of Use (or Excusable Nonuse) and an Application for Renewal between the 9th and 10th years after the registration date.* See 15 U.S.C. §1059.

Requirements in Successive Ten-Year Periods*

What and When to File:

- You must file a Declaration of Use (or Excusable Nonuse) and an Application for Renewal between every 9th and 10th-year period, calculated from the registration date.*

Grace Period Filings*

The above documents will be accepted as timely if filed within six months after the deadlines listed above with the payment of an additional fee.

***ATTENTION MADRID PROTOCOL REGISTRANTS:** The holder of an international registration with an extension of protection to the United States under the Madrid Protocol must timely file the Declarations of Use (or Excusable Nonuse) referenced above directly with the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO). The time periods for filing are based on the U.S. registration date (not the international registration date). The deadlines and grace periods for the Declarations of Use (or Excusable Nonuse) are identical to those for nationally issued registrations. See 15 U.S.C. §§1058, 1141k. However, owners of international registrations do not file renewal applications at the USPTO. Instead, the holder must file a renewal of the underlying international registration at the International Bureau of the World Intellectual Property Organization, under Article 7 of the Madrid Protocol, before the expiration of each ten-year term of protection, calculated from the date of the international registration. See 15 U.S.C. §1141j. For more information and renewal forms for the international registration, see <http://www.wipo.int/madrid/en/>.

NOTE: Fees and requirements for maintaining registrations are subject to change. Please check the USPTO website for further information. With the exception of renewal applications for registered extensions of protection, you can file the registration maintenance documents referenced above online at <http://www.uspto.gov>.

NOTE: A courtesy e-mail reminder of USPTO maintenance filing deadlines will be sent to trademark owners/holders who authorize e-mail communication and maintain a current e-mail address with the USPTO. To ensure that e-mail is authorized and your address is current, please use the Trademark Electronic Application System (TEAS) Correspondence Address and Change of Owner Address Forms available at <http://www.uspto.gov>.

EXHIBIT 2



EXHIBIT 3







P R R E P O R T

Q 4 2 0 2 0

buzzlounge

WATERLOO
SPARKLING WATER

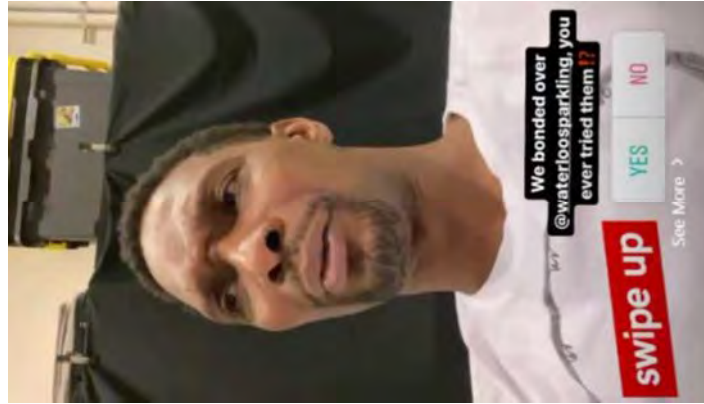


chrisbosh   

1,021 posts 2.5m followers 1,027 following

Chris Bosh
Athlete

🏆 2x NBA Champ #HeatNation 🔥
👨‍👦 5x Father ❤️ @mrsadriennebosh
📞 Text me w/ questions (305) 931-0233
👉 Turning obstacles into opportunities 👈
youtube.com/cboshtv



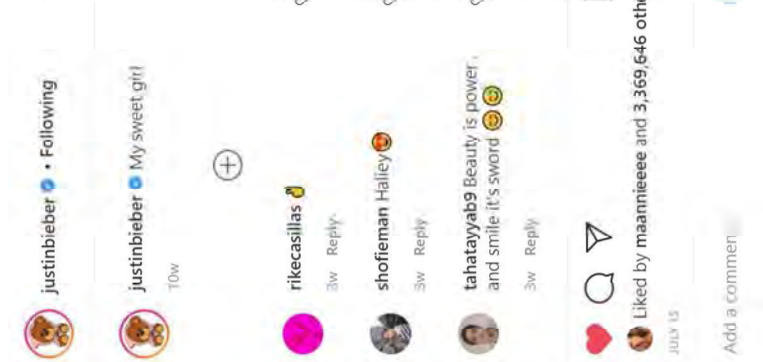
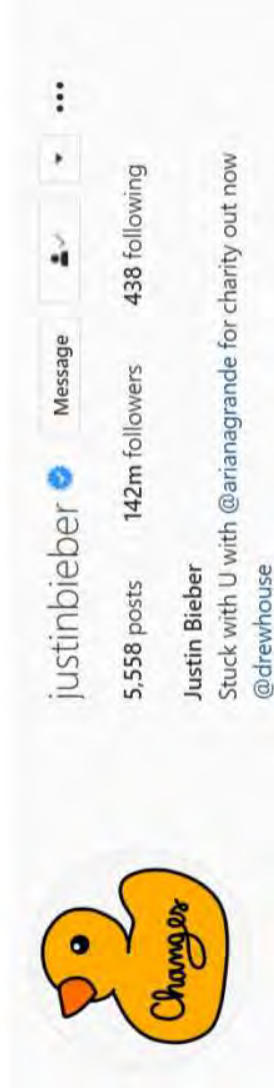
buzzlounge


TOP SOCIAL HITS

@chrisbosh
February 14, 2020
2.5m followers


Chris Bosh posted about Waterloo after bonding over it with Alexis Ohanian while recording an episode of Alexis' podcast.

<p><i>buzzlounge</i></p>	<p>TOP SOCIAL HITS</p> <p>@justinbieber July 15, 2020 142m followers</p>
	<p>Justin Bieber posted Waterloo both in-feed and on his Instagram story in July.</p>





TOP SOCIAL HITS



alecbaldwininsta

2,473 posts 1.7m followers 656 following

Alec Baldwin

Forward my calls...

www.wnycstudios.org/podcasts/heresthething/episodes/everybody-loves-stanley-...

@alecbaldwininsta

July 27, 2020

1.7m followers

Alec Baldwin posted a can of Black Cherry on his Instagram, citing Waterloo as one of his favorite sparkling water brands.

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EXHIBIT 4

FOOD & DRINK

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10 Best Sparkling Water Brands to Sip On this 2021

By Steven John



With spring fast approaching, a nice refreshment is important to stay hydrated at all times. One drink that has stood the test of time — and has exploded in popularity in the last few years thanks to a few different factors — is sparkling water. No matter where you go, someone is bound to be sipping on some bubbles (both of the alcoholic and non-varieties).

ADVERTISEMENT

Why? It's delicious, that's why. Duh. Not only that, it offers a flavorful option that isn't high in sugar, carbs, et cetera that you would find in beer or soda. And for those looking for a mid-day bubbler, the fact that it is alcohol-free means that you can pound as many as you want during that conference call with no worry of it affecting your performance (except for some burps).

Related Reading:

- [Best Tonic Waters](#)
- [Best Vodka Mixers](#)
- [Best Gin Mixers](#)

Whether you're looking to replace sugar-filled sodas with something lower in calories, trying to find a great substitute for your post-workout or lawnmower beer, or you're already a fan of flavored fizzy water, you're in the right place. I was slurping back cans of club soda long before [sparkling water](#) worked its way into the zeitgeist, and I've been thrilled to see this section of the grocery store beverage aisle grow. By my quick estimation, I've probably tried 20 or more different kinds of flavored, carbonated waters in recent years, so you can trust me when I say these are the best sparkling water brands you simply must sip this spring... or any season, actually.

[La Croix Sparkling Water](#)

If you're a fan of fizzy water, then you already know [La Croix](#). This brand is "sweeping the nation" as my friend Tom so aptly put it, and the brand is doing so for one reason above all: There does not seem to be a single fruit [La Croix](#) has not yet used to create a seltzer water flavor. (OK, maybe breadfruit.) In fact, the brand is even running out of blends of fruit at this point! There's coconut, passion fruit, key lime, apricot, mango, and oh so many more. Blends include peach-pear, pineapple-strawberry, sweet and sour blackberry-cucumber, and so forth. At the time of this writing, La Croix offers more than 20 different flavors, but by the time you read this, I'll bet they've added jackfruit-huckleberry and kiwi-fig. (Full disclosure: There are several empty cans of La Croix Passionfruit sitting on my desk right now. For real. I should probably recycle them at some point.)

BUY AT AMAZON

[Waterloo Sparkling Water](#)



Waterloo sparkling waters hail from Austin, Texas, and they are Texas-sized in flavor. Whether you're sipping watermelon, grapefruit, black cherry, or any of their other flavors, you'll probably find yourself checking the nutrition facts with incredulity, surprised to find that this stuff is indeed free of sugars, calories, sodium, and... well, everything. The company states that the huge flavor profiles are created thanks to a three "class" system: Class A ingredients are aromatic extracts captured from steam boiled off fruits, Class B ingredients consist of concentrated fruit oils extracted using high pressures, and Class C ingredients are "all-natural botanical elements" that help "bond Class A and Class B ingredients together." I'm not 100-percent (or even 43-percent) sure what they mean by Class C, but I *am* 100-percent sure that these are the most flavorful seltzer waters I've ever tasted.

BUY AT AMAZON

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Schweppes Sparkling Water Beverage



People have been drinking Schweppes for what historians term a long-ass time. The brand was founded back in 1783, so that means a 238-year history as of 2021. I've only been drinking Schweppes for about three decades, but that's only because I didn't drink sodas or seltzers or anything of that ilk until my elementary school years. While perhaps best known for their tonic waters, ginger ales, and classic club soda, today Schweppes offers seven flavored sparkling waters that are refreshing, tasty, and priced to sell. My personal favorites are black cherry and cranberry lime, but who knows, you may be a pink grapefruit or pomegranate fan. Sidebar: If you mix some Schweppes seltzer water with fine booze (bourbon and orange FTW, or a good vodka with any of 'em), you're doing it right.

BUY AT TARGET

Polar Beverages



If you love soda but realize that drinking more than a couple of sodas a week is really not best practice, then you owe it to yourself to try Polar Beverages. Sure, this company makes a lime flavor, a lemon, and an original just like everyone else, but Polar also offers some blends that are tasty enough to curb your desire for cola or root beer. Try orange vanilla, triple berry, granny smith apple, or strawberry

watermelon if you want something sweet, and don't miss cranberry lime or ruby red grapefruit for pure refreshment. Ah, what the hell... just try all 17 flavors the brand offers.

BUY AT AMAZON

Perrier Sparkling Natural Mineral Water



You've drunk plenty of Perrier in your day, no? You've sipped it on airplanes, in hotel rooms, at the house of that one friend whose mom always had lots of Perrier around, and so on. So you know what this stuff is, then: sparkling water with minimal mineral flavoring. Right? Wrong! Oh, you're so wrong. In recent years, this staid water purveyor has added numerous fine flavors to the lineup. Perrier now offers flavored seltzers like peach, watermelon, strawberry, green apple, and more. Now look, Perrier waters don't pack as much flavor punch as most other brands, and they sparkle with less vigor, too. But that's kind of the point here — sometimes you don't want to be overwhelmed with taste and effervescence, you just want a bit of mild refreshment. When that happens, grab these new twists from a classic brand.

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BUY AT AMAZON

ADVERTISEMENT

Adirondack Seltzer



Like the waters that flow down the rivers through the Adirondack Mountains, Adirondack seltzer is crystal clear (well, obviously), but that clarity also translates to the flavor profiles of the brand's flavored seltzers. Take the lemon-lime, for example. It is crisp and bright and doesn't taste like you're drinking a chemical solvent of some sort. Adirondack also gets bonus points for creativity — the brand sells a white chocolate-flavored seltzer. It won't be for everyone, but it is definitely something to try at least once.

BUY AT AMAZON

Bubly Sparkling Water



Pepsi's entrant into the sparkling water game is Bubly, a hell of a name for people who hate the red squiggle on Microsoft Word, but also a hell of a beverage. Designed with (we can only guess) millennials in mind, the cans are bright and offer up greetings on the tabs, automatically making you feel like you're making the right decision by opening a can. The brand has eight flavors, with mangobubly, cherrybubly, and limebubly being some of the top flavors (and yes, they're all spelled like that, for better or worse). They manage to pack a lot in without the flavors being overwhelming and veering toward soda.

BUY AT AMAZON

Deer Park Sparkling Water

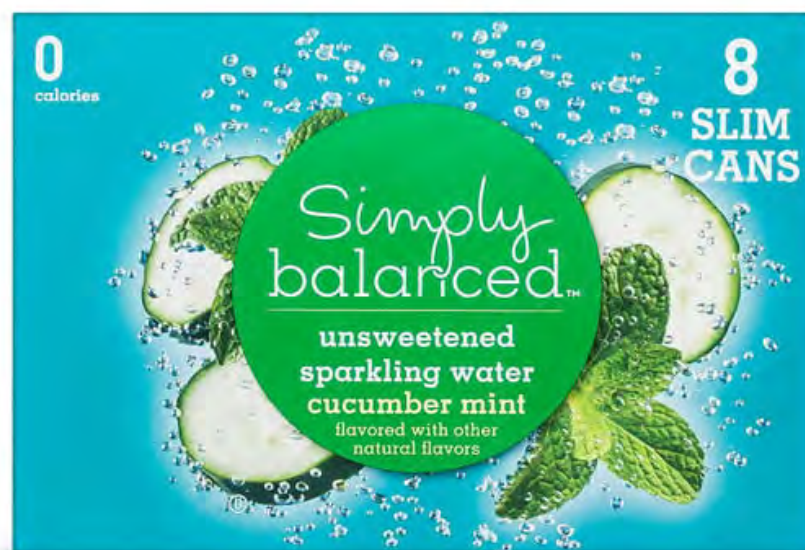


A standard when it comes to regular ol' bottled water, Deer Park also makes a fantastic sparkling beverage. Using real fruit flavors, their line of nine different flavors covers a good deal of the fruity landscape. The pomegranate lemonade is zippy and tart while the wild berry has a roundness to the flavor profile that makes it great when it's ice cold. If you're used to drinking Deer Park bottled water, then this will be an easy transition when you want something with a little more kick to it.

BUY AT AMAZON

ADVERTISEMENT

Simply Balanced Sparkling Water



Sold exclusively at Target, Simply Balanced (one of Target's in-house brands) is a line of sparkling waters that come in 10 different flavors, is sold in easy-to-store slim cans, and (perhaps most importantly) is pretty dang cheap — an eight-pack will run you \$3. The flavors are nicely balanced and make great no-calorie mixers for a wide range of highballs (making it easy if you want to do, say, a highball bar cocktail party). Start by trying the pineapple coconut (with rum) or cucumber mint (with gin), then branch out from there.

BUY AT TARGET

Spindrift Sparkling Water



OK, so one on this list is not like the others, and it is Spindrift. Unlike the other beverages listed above, Spindrift uses real juice (just squeezed, according to the brand) to flavor its sparkling waters. There are pros and cons to this approach — if you want a calorie-free beverage, then this isn't for you. If you want real flavors (as opposed to the "natural flavors" you'll find in most seltzers), then Spindrift is indeed for you. Also, because of the fruit, the drinks are bright and colorful, which is aesthetically a nice touch. The blackberry, raspberry lime, and cranberry raspberry all made for great refreshers (though if you're in for Spindrift, you won't be disappointed by the other six flavors, either).

BUY AT AMAZON

And remember, if you love sparkling water but always wished it came with booze already in it, there's plenty of hard seltzer out there, too.

Article originally published by Steven John on April 11, 2018. Last updated March 2021.

Editors' Recommendations

- [A Novice Cheesemaker's Guide on How to Make Cheese at Home](#)
- [Here Are The 3 Best Kitchen Knife Set Deals During Way Day 2021](#)
- [The 9 Best Cardio Workouts to Shake Up Your Routine](#)
- [The Best Cuts of Steak to Buy and Tips on How to Cook Them](#)

NUTRITION



10 of the Best Flavored Water Brands



Written by Makayla Meixner MS, RDN on April 27, 2020 — Medically reviewed by Adrienne Seitz, MS, RD, LDN

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If you buy something through a link on this page, we may earn a small commission. [How this works.](#)

Flavored waters can be a healthy addition to your fridge or cooler.

Many people drink them instead of soft drinks and other sugary beverages, which often pack excess calories and little to no nutritional value (1[✓]).

Depending on the type, flavored waters can be refreshing and hydrating without contributing to unwanted weight gain. Some varieties even boast beneficial antioxidants from plant extracts and fruit juices (2).

Here are 10 of the best flavored water brands based on their nutritional value.



Product	What makes it stand out
ADVERTISEMENT	



Spindrift	sparkling water with real fruit juice
-----------	---------------------------------------

☰

🔍

healthline

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maple water	a burst of maple flavor
Sound sparkling water	infused with tea for your caffeine kick
Polar seltzer	18 natural flavor options
Waterloo	unique fruit flavors, free of any additives
LaCroix	packs a carbonated, fruity punch
Ugly	sparkling waters with fun flavors like peach
Perrier	check out the lemon, lime, and pink grapefruit flavors

1. Frozen Garden fusions



Frozen Garden fusions are blends of 100% fruit and herbs frozen into small pieces, allowing you to flavor your water at home. You simply drop one piece into a glass of water and stir occasionally until it melts in 3–5 minutes.

Each piece makes 12 ounces (355 mL) of flavored water that contains only 5 calories, 1 gram of carbs, and no added sugars or artificial ingredients — plus 6% of the Daily Value (DV) for [vitamin C](#) (3).

Since fusions are made from real fruit, they also supply antioxidants, which combat inflammation and may reduce your risk of chronic disease (4👍, 5👍).

[Shop for Frozen Garden fusions online.](#)

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Spindrift makes [sparkling water](#) from real fruit juices and pureés.

These ingredients differentiate it from many other brands, which may use natural flavors but don't identify the specific sources.

Furthermore, their products are free of added sugars, dyes, and artificial ingredients.

Spindrift is available in several flavors, such as raspberry lime, orange mango, and cucumber. Depending on the flavor, each 12-ounce (355-mL) can contains 2–17 calories, 0–4 grams of carbs, and up to 10% fruit juice (6).

[Shop for Spindrift sparkling water online.](#)

3. JUST Water



JUST Water is a non-carbonated spring water infused with organic fruit essences.

Fruit essences, also called aromas, are one of many natural flavor substances approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). They're derived by heating [fruit](#), collecting the resulting vapor, and condensing it for use in foods and beverages (7).

Each 16.9-ounce (500-mL) carton is free of calories, added sugars, and artificial sweeteners.

Notably, the carton is made mostly from paper while its cap is made from sugarcane (8).

Plus, the carton can be refilled, which may make it appealing if you're looking to avoid single-use plastic water bottles — which aren't designed to be reused (9 ✓).

[Shop for JUST Water online.](#)

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4. Drink Simple sparkling maple water



Drink Simple sparkling waters contain carbonated maple water and juice concentrates.

Maple water is the clear, slightly sweet sap found in maple trees. It's collected by tapping a spout into a maple tree, which allows the sap to flow out.

Though it can be boiled down into [maple syrup](#), maple water itself isn't sticky — in fact, it looks and feels just like regular water.

It's a natural source of antioxidants and essential minerals, such as manganese, which plays a role in digestion, metabolism, and immune response ([10](#), [11](#) ✓).

Since maple water and juice concentrates contribute some naturally occurring sugars, these flavored waters are not calorie-free. However, they have roughly 70% fewer calories than the same serving of a soft drink ([12](#) ✓).

Each 12-ounce (355-mL) can contains 40 calories, 10 grams of carbs, 40% of the DV for manganese, 4% of the DV for calcium, and 1% of the DV for potassium ([13](#)).

[Shop for Drink Simple sparkling maple water online.](#)

5. Sound sparkling water



The company Sound infuses sparkling water with a variety of organic teas, herbs, and fruit extracts to create unique flavor combinations.

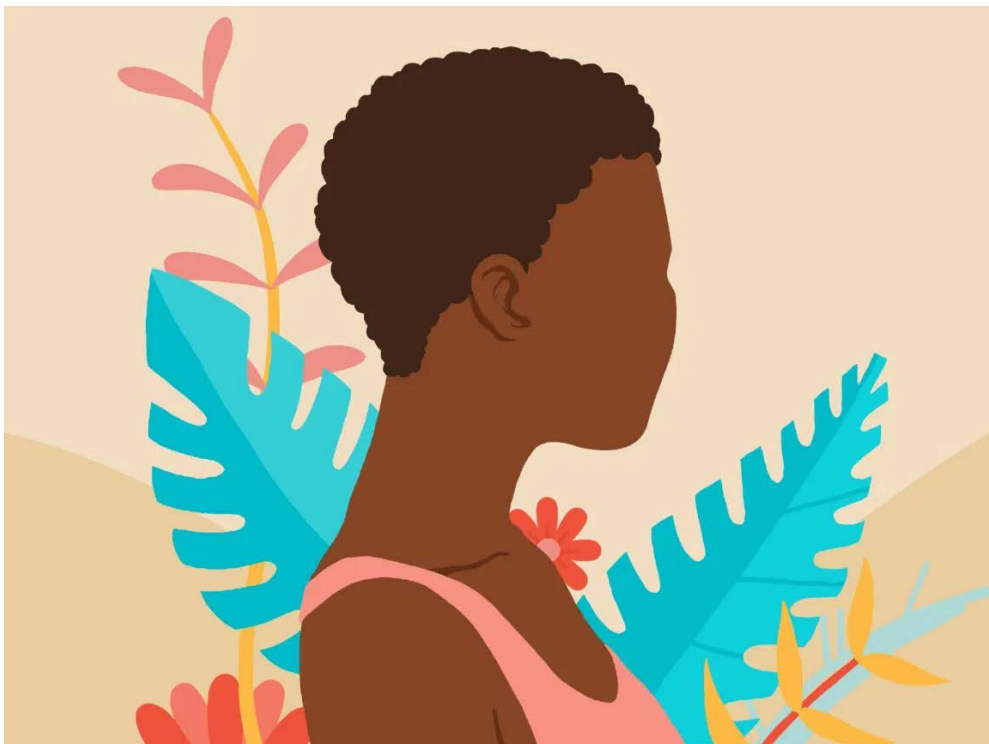
These drinks are free of calories, sweeteners, and artificial ingredients. The green and black tea varieties contain 45 mg of caffeine per 12-ounce (355-mL) can, while the ginger and hibiscus tea flavors are caffeine-free ([14](#)).

concentration of plant compounds called flavonoids (15[✓]).

For example, multiple human studies associate green tea with a reduced risk of heart disease (16[✓], 17[✓]).

[Shop for Sound sparkling water online.](#)

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6. Polar seltzer



Polar Beverages offers 18 flavors of seltzer water, plus several seasonal varieties.

The only ingredients are carbonated water and natural flavors, which are derived from fruit essences (18).

They're unsweetened, calorie-free, and contain no artificial ingredients.

[Shop for Polar seltzer water online.](#)

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7. Waterloo



Waterloo sparkling waters are free of sugar, sweeteners, and other additives. The only ingredients are carbonated water and natural flavors derived from fruit essences (19).

Additionally, their cans are free of [bisphenol A](#) (BPA), a harmful chemical found in the packaging of many foods and beverages (20).

[Shop for Waterloo sparkling water online.](#)

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This popular sparkling water comes in over 20 flavors.

LaCroix products have no calories, added sugars, artificial sweeteners, or other artificial ingredients. They're flavored with natural fruit essences (21).

[Shop for LaCroix flavored sparkling water online.](#)

9. Ugly



Ugly sparkling waters are made without calories, sugar, or artificial ingredients. Their products are infused with fruit extracts, natural aromas, and essential oils (22).

[Essential oils](#) are highly concentrated oils extracted from plants that carry potent flavors and fragrances. Though you should never ingest them on their own, the FDA has approved certain types in small amounts for flavoring food and beverages (23).

[Shop for Ugly flavored sparkling water online.](#)

10. Perrier



Perrier sparkling water originated in France and is widely available throughout North America and Europe.

Although best known for its plain [mineral water](#), Perrier also sells lemon, lime, and pink grapefruit flavors. All are calorie-free and contain 4% of the DV for calcium per 8.5-ounce (250-mL) can (24).

Like other brands, Perrier contains just carbonated water and natural flavors (25).

[Shop for Perrier sparkling water online.](#)

Homemade flavored water

If you'd rather save money and reduce waste, it's easy to make flavored

• • •


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Simply add your favorite sliced fruits and herbs to cold water — the longer you let it sit, the stronger the flavor.

Here are some popular flavor combinations:



- [lemon](#) and lime
- strawberry and cucumber
- watermelon and mint
- blackberry and [sage](#)
- raspberry and orange

The nutritional content of homemade flavored waters varies depending on the recipe. However, homemade flavored waters are typically very low in calories and may supply vitamin C and other water-soluble vitamins from the fresh fruit ([26](#) )



What's more, they may help reduce your carbon footprint.



An estimated 38 billion plastic water bottles end up in landfills each year in the United States alone. Drinking homemade flavored water from a glass or reusable bottle may help reduce this waste ([27](#) )

How to choose

When choosing flavored waters, you should avoid those with added sugars, such as cane sugar and [high fructose corn syrup](#), as these may lead to weight gain and other health issues ([28](#) , [29](#) )

Based on your personal preferences, you may also want to steer clear of products containing artificial ingredients like preservatives, flavorings, dyes, and sweeteners.

While human studies tie [artificial sweeteners](#) to obesity and other related conditions, other research suggests they may aid weight loss when consumed in place of sugar ([30](#) , [31](#) )

Many flavored waters contain natural flavors, which are derived from animal or plant sources. That said, some of these are highly processed, and companies aren't required to disclose their sources ([32](#) , [33](#) )

If this is a concern to you, you're better off making flavored water at home using fresh sliced fruit and water.

A variety of great flavored waters are available on the market.

The options listed in this article are low calorie or calorie-free — without any [added sugars](#) or artificial ingredients.

The next time you're hankering for a bit of sweetness or fizz, grab one of these drinks instead of a [soda](#).



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Last medically reviewed on April 27, 2020



FEEDBACK:  

Thirsty? Here Are 9 Types of Water You Can Drink



Medically reviewed by [Carissa Stephens, R.N., CCRN, CPN](#) — Written by Jennifer Still — Updated on March 8, 2019

[Tap](#) [Mineral](#) [Spring or glacier](#) [Sparkling](#) [Distilled](#) [Purified](#)

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You hear it all the time: [You should be drinking more water](#). How much depends on the person, but generally speaking, staying well hydrated offers a [host of health benefits](#). That includes higher energy levels and better brain function, just to name a few.

But not all water is created equal, with some being cheaper or providing more nutrients than others.

Here are the different types of water and what you should know about them.

Tap water



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A piped water supply, tap water is found everywhere from the water that flushes a public toilet to the water that comes out of your kitchen sink or cleans your glassware in your dishwasher.

Pros

Though many people turn their noses up at the idea of drinking tap water over taste or safety concerns, the truth is that tap water is [safe to drink](#) across much of the United States.

What's more, tap water isn't only good for you, it's cheaper than buying various types of bottled water.

Cons

While there are [industry regulations in place](#) [👍] that are meant to keep lead and other harmful substances from contaminating the water supply, sometimes this doesn't work. A prime example of this is the ongoing water crisis in [Flint, Michigan](#).

Moreover, the Guardian reported on research showing [plastic particles in tap water supplies around the world](#).

Public water supplies can also contain [pesticide residue](#), aluminum, and other undesirable substances. If, however, you're worried that the treatments performed on your water supply aren't up to par, you can always purchase a home filtration system for further cleansing.

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Mineral water

Pulled from a mineral spring, mineral water is, as the name states, full of minerals including sulfur, magnesium, and calcium — all things that are good for you.

Pros

Mineral water does indeed have [some health benefits](#) , since it provides minerals your body can't create on its own. It can also help aid in digestion, and many people even like the taste of it over tap water, though that's down to personal preference.

Cons

One of the main downsides to mineral water is cost, especially when compared to tap water. Many of the minerals from this type of water can also be obtained from a healthy, varied diet.

Spring or glacier water



Spring or glacier waters are types of bottled waters that are claimed to be bottled at the source from where the water flows — either from the spring or glacier.

Pros

In theory, spring or glacier waters should be relatively clean and free of

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It also tends to be pretty readily available in stores, think well-known brands like [Evian](#) and [Arrowhead](#), in both large and small bottles, which makes it easily accessible.

Cons

Depending on how much you drink, spring water could get pricey, especially in comparison to tap water. Also, some spring water is raw, unfiltered, and untested water, which could pose potential [health risks](#) depending on what it contains.

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Sparkling water

Sometimes referred to as carbonated water or soda water, sparkling water is infused with carbon dioxide gas while under pressure.

Pros

Sparkling water offers a different mouth feel to flat water, which could be a welcome change if you want something fizzy without sugar or artificial sweeteners

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That said, there are flavored sparkling waters available that do contain one or both types of sweeteners. Plus, because [sparkling water tends to be mineralized](#) — think [Perrier](#) and [San Pellegrino](#) — you're getting the added bonus of health-promoting minerals with your carbonation.

Cons

While there are some minerals present in sparkling water, there aren't enough to be truly beneficial to your health in a meaningful way. In addition, it can be expensive compared to both tap and certain types of bottled water.

Distilled water

This type of water is boiled and the steam is collected and condensed back into a liquid.

Pros

Distilled water is a great option if you live somewhere — or are visiting somewhere — where the tap water supply is contaminated or possibly could be.

Cons

As there are [no vitamins and minerals in distilled water](#), there are no health benefits. In fact, it has the potential to be detrimental as non-mineralized water tends to pull minerals from where it can — in this case, your body, or specifically your teeth.

Purified water

Purified water is usually tap or groundwater which has been treated to remove harmful substances like bacteria, fungi, and parasites.

This means that drinking it is pretty much guaranteed to be safe.

Pros

Like distilled water, purified water is a great option if your immediate water source is contaminated. That said, many countries purify tap water, so you're basically drinking purified water every time you fill a cup from your kitchen sink.

Cons

Because all potentially harmful substances are removed from purified water, you also miss out on some of the potentially beneficial ones that are added to tap water supplies like fluoride, which helps to reduce tooth decay.

In addition, purchasing purified water or even installing a filtration system at home can be pretty costly.

Flavored or infused water

Flavored water is water that's sweetened with either sugar or artificial sweeteners, and contains natural or artificial flavorings.

Pros

Flavored water, like [Hint](#) and [Propel](#), can offer a tasty alternative to plain water, which makes it easier to drink in larger amounts.

vegetables into tap or bottled water, or you could purchase artificially flavored waters in most stores.

Cons

Often, flavored waters contain added sugar or artificial sweeteners. Varieties with sugar can lead to weight gain and have a negative effect on those with [diabetes](#). What's more, some people may react negatively to artificial sweeteners.

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Alkaline water

Alkaline water has a higher pH level than normal tap water and contains [alkaline minerals and negative oxidation reduction potential \(ORP\)](#).

Pros

The fact that this type of water has a higher pH level has led some people to believe that it may help neutralize acid in the body, help slow the aging process, or even prevent cancer.

There's [very little scientific proof](#), however, of this being true.

Cons

It's generally safe to drink alkaline water, but it could reduce stomach acidity, thereby lowering its ability to kill off harmful bacteria.

In excess, it could also lead to metabolic [alkalosis](#), which could produce symptoms like nausea and vomiting.

Well water

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Well water comes straight from the ground, though it's untreated and carries with it a number of risks.

Pros

If you happen to live in an area where wells are plentiful, or you even have one in your own backyard, the convenient access to what seems like fresh water could be attractive.

While there are many proponents of [raw, untreated water](#), the benefits may not outweigh the potential risks.

That said, there are [steps](#) you can take to ensure your well water is suitable for drinking. For example, testing your well water annually for bacteria, nitrates, and pH levels. It's also possible to install a filtration system.

Cons

Because the water hasn't been treated, there's a big chance of contamination — particularly from bacterial and parasitic infections like giardia.

While well water used to be the norm, there's a reason that city water supplies and the regulations surrounding them were put into place — you simply don't know what you're getting unless you test or treat the well water yourself.

The bottom line

While you may have a preference for which type of water is best,

So long as the water you're drinking is clean and safe, the main focus is to make sure that you stay hydrated and to ensure you're drinking enough water on a regular basis.

Jennifer Still is an editor and writer with bylines in Vanity Fair, Glamour, Bon Appetit, Business Insider, and more. She writes about food and culture. Follow her on [Twitter](#).

Last medically reviewed on January 29, 2019

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Ranked: Sparkling Water Flavors



Kyle Galvin Mar 19, 2020 · 7 min read



I thought long and hard about what my first topic should be for this.

I have a note started on my phone with a list of topics I plan on writing about and I was debating what to start with, but I pivoted when I got a call this morning from my friend Rob requesting I rank sparkling water flavors at some point. I haven't been able to stop thinking about it since our chat this morning.

RULES

1. Rankings are based completely off of taste and my personal preference. In general, no consideration is given to cost (sorry Belle Vie), branding, or influence on the market (aka no advantage for LaCroix being the GOAT of the sparkling water industry). ***Update after finishing the list: I realized I have a lot of arbitrary reasons for liking some flavors more than others, so take this rule with a grain of salt. ***
2. This is not a list of what I think *other* people like the most. I'm well aware some of my preferences go against conventional norms — wait until you see my #1. My list, my preference.
3. Re-drinkability matters. I've gone through fads with many flavors, so I value the ones that have stood up to my preferences changing over time. Even if a particular flavor has never been my favorite at any particular time, if it has consistently been in my rotation it will take precedence over another flavor that I drank a lot at one point but no longer drink anymore.
4. Multiple brands of the same general flavor will not make the list multiple times. For example, I like all peach flavors regardless of brand. "Peach" will take up one spot on the list, with my favorite brand of peach occupying that spot on the list. You have to be the best in a particular flavor category to make the list.
5. Anything that has more sugar or flavor than Spindrift does not count. You won't see traditional San Pellegrino on this list (although they did come out with a true sparkling water, which would count.)
6. I have heard good things about AHA, but have yet to try, so therefore it will not make this list. Also, I know I said cost and branding don't matter, but for some reason I dislike the *Cinate* line of LaCroix, so it is disqualified from this list because I never buy it.

OKAY GALV, GET TO THE LIST

#10

Grapefruit — Perrier





Lots of solid grapefruit options out there, but every now and again I enjoy the change of pace of drinking out of the slim Perrier bottle rather than a can.

Note: LaCroix naming their grapefruit flavor “Pamplemousse” is one of the weirdest decisions in the history of sparkling water. I believe they re-branded it recently to “Grapefruit,” but the damage has been done.

#9

Apricot — LaCroix



I debated whether Apricot should have been lumped into the peach family of flavors in the same way that I consider Tangerine and Orange LaCroix in the orange family of flavors. But I guess in this case Apricot seems different enough to merit its own ranking.

#8

Raspberry — Bubly





This ranking will disappoint some. Yes, this means that Razz-Cranberry LaCroix doesn't make my list. Razz-Cran LaCroix has its place in history, but Raspberry Bubly is flat-out better. Raspberry Bubly finishes a lot smoother than Razz-Cran LaCroix does, which is why it takes this place on the list.

Note: LaCroix's version of Raspberry had forever been called Cran-Raspberry, until recently when Razz-Cranberry LaCroix appeared on the shelves. I found a can of both the original Cran-Raspberry and the new Razz-Cranberry and conducted a blind taste test a few months ago to see if anything was different and concluded that they in fact were the same flavor. LaCroix eventually came out and clarified the mystery on their packaging (see below), noting that they are the same flavor. I suspect the flavor Raspberry is more popular than Cranberry so they decided to lead with the more popular flavor in the name. But again, an odd branding decision by LaCroix.



#7

Strawberry — Bubly



Similar to Raspberry Bubly, Strawberry Bubly finishes very smooth and I appreciate the decision to have a plain strawberry flavor. Enough of the Strawberry-Mango, Strawberry-Banana, Strawberry-Orange, Strawberry-You-Name-It flavors. Strawberry is good enough on its own.

Honorable Mention: Strawberry-Guava Dasani is excellent, despite the combination with another flavor.

#6

Pineapple — Bubly



Recently released as a new summer flavor, Pineapple Bubly jumped into my rotation immediately. It had often been my after lunch beverage choice when I was working in the office. Flavorful and smooth (a theme for Bubly). Nails the Pineapple flavor better than other brands.

#5

Watermelon — Waterloo



Waterloo does watermelon better than any other brand. Watermelon Waterloo tastes natural, which is uncommon for Watermelon flavored anything. Other brands of watermelon tend to taste more artificial. Nice to see one of the non-major brands creep its way into the top five.

#4

Blackberry — Bubly



Bubly nailed their berry flavors (see Strawberry at #7 and Raspberry at #8) and Blackberry takes the cake in that group. Bubly consistently displays it finishes

smoother than any other brand. Blackberries are one of my favorite fruits and Bubly does them justice.

#3

Blood Orange — Dasani



Probably the biggest surprise of this list (other than the Razz-Cran controversy). And honestly, under some methods of ranking, Blood Orange Dasani should be at the top of this list. Blood Orange Dasani is bold and BLOWS AWAY the other competition in the orange flavor category. No other brand of orange comes close to the top 10 — in fact they're some of my least favorite. Unlike other flavors where the brand is less important (see #2), I implore you to drink Dasani if you like orange.

Note: Although Dasani only makes my list once, they're a highly underrated brand.

#2

Peach-Pear — LaCroix





No surprises here. Who doesn't like Peach-Pear? The peach-pear combination separates LaCroix from other brands of peach or pear. I recognize peach and pear are different fruits, but LaCroix redefines the category, so thus I'm treating them as one flavor rather than two.

Honorable Mentions: Pear Dasani, White Peach Dasani, Peach Bubly.

Sort-of Honorable Mention: Simply Balanced Ginger Peach deserves to be mentioned due to its uniqueness, but I'm not sure if I actually like it.

#1

Coconut — LaCroix



This is up there on the surprise factor, and I think many will disagree with this decision, but Coconut LaCroix is the most reliable and pragmatic flavor of them all. Coconut certainly isn't flashy, and I actually disliked this flavor initially, but I've grown to love it and it has found its place as the most consistent in my rotation. I don't know that Coconut has ever been my favorite flavor at a specific time in my life, but inevitably when other flavors fall in and out of my favor, Coconut remains. The simplicity of flavor and clean finish place it at the top. Just because it isn't showy doesn't mean it shouldn't be #1, okay?! Let's give some love to the underdogs who fly under the radar but still outperform the rest.

Brand Breakdown

LaCroix: #1, #2, #9

Bubly: #4, #6, #7, #8

Dasani: #3

Waterloo: #5

Perrier: #10

Kyle's Cumulative Quarantine Stats

Days Without Leaving Apartment Complex: 2/2

Days Wearing Sweatpants: 2/2

Days Without Engaging In Person With Another Human: 2/2

Socks of the Day



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Writing over 1,200 words on sparkling water flavors.



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Say No To Soda! Try Mothering's Best Soda Alternatives Instead

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Lori Ennis · Mar 12, 2020 · Edited by Moderator Mar 18, 2020



Talk about a crisis of epidemic proportions. The average American drinks 38 gallons of soda each year, and many admit that this is far more water than they drink, if they even drink water.

The soft drink industry, though somewhat on the decline, still is a multi-billion dollar industry, and sodas/soft drinks make up a quarter of all drinks that Americans consume. And while surveys find that more people are drinking bottled water than soda (yay!), we still hope to discourage the use of plastic bottled water and instead reusable water bottles or healthier soda alternatives.

Because we get it. There really is something about a cold, carbonated drink some days that hits the spot.

It used to be that there weren't too many soda alternatives that could fit the bill, but oh, what a wonderful world it is that we live in now! From [SodaStreams](#) and [DrinkMates](#) to several different carbonated waters and drinks that are far healthier than soda...we have options!

What's So Bad About Soda And Why Should I Look For The Best Soda Alternatives?

Okay, okay. We know that odds are, if you're reading this, you most likely have an idea about the dangers of soda. That said, we're going to be upfront. We really, really want you to give soda up.

Yes, for the most part, "Things in moderation," can be a decent mantra to live by. But when it comes to soda, and especially the sugar in soda...it may be very hard to even 'do' in moderation because of the addictive nature of sugar.

We talked to [Dr. Nicole Avena](#), a research neuroscientist and pioneer in the field of food addiction. Because of her research, a new field of exploration in nutrition and medicine was jump-started. She's the author of [Why Diets Fail \(Because You're Addicted To Sugar\)](#) and [What To Eat When You're Pregnant](#). She tells us that there are numerous reasons sodas are bad for us, and that drinking sugar-sweetened beverages like soda have been linked to premature death.

Sugar is addictive. Addictive like **drugs and alcohol** addictive. We know that sounds excessive and like a

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scare tactic, but it's supported by science. You may know that your brain has a reward/pleasure center that's dominated by dopamine (a 'feel-good' hormone) exposure. When you consume sugar, [your brain's pleasure center produces surges of dopamine](#), in a similar fashion as it does when you may consume heroin or cocaine. This part of your brain is near your cerebral cortex and called the nucleus accumbens. Then, a different part of your brain, the hippocampus, takes note of this surge of satisfaction and remembers it. All this while still another part of your brain, the amygdala takes note of that surge too and conditions your feel-good response to that stimulus (the sugar). Doing this, it also encourages you to continue to seek this behavior out again and again. It's basically how you become addicted to drugs and alcohol. Your brain will

crave that dopamine because, duh. It feels GOOD. You may KNOW in your head that the soda you are drinking has 54 grams of sugar, but your brain tells you, "Meh, that's not as much as you really think it is." The euphoric feeling that comes from the sugar literally alters your brain's chemistry and has you prioritize feeling good over logical and rational, healthy thinking.



Courtesy of Diabetes.co.uk

And [science proves over and over again](#) that intermittent access to sugar can lead to changes in your brain's chemistry that look frighteningly close to those brains of people who suffer from substance abuse.

So, no. We honestly don't believe that even moderation is healthy for you when it comes to the sugar in soda.

And that's just the SUGAR issue. We haven't even talked about diabetes or obesity the [connection between sugar and cancer](#), but...when it comes to soda, we don't have to because there are plenty of OTHER cancer concerns.

For instance, you may think you're doing alright because you watch your soda by drinking 'diet' soda. Think again. In most common diet sodas, the substitute for sugar is aspartame, and researchers believe that may even be more dangerous than sugar. Aspartame has been linked to tons of various health problems, including diabetes, brain tumors, seizures, multiple sclerosis and more. At higher temperatures, aspartame converts to methanol. **Did you know that methanol breaks down to formic acid and formaldehyde?** That's right; you may be cutting calories, but at the risk so many more health issues like higher cholesterol and blood sugar, not to mention extra belly fat. And we all know NO ONE has any time for extra belly fat from chemicals!

Most sodas also have caffeine, and while we love our morning (or 1:37 pm) coffee as much as the next mama, caffeine has been linked to breast lumps, high blood pressure, irregular heart rates and even certain cancers. If you're drinking a soda or two a day? Not good.

Let's also talk about the high fructose corn syrup that most conventional sodas have. Obviously, the corn syrup comes from corn, and the bulk of that corn? Genetically modified. And did you know that the process of making high fructose corn syrup (yes, it's synthetically made) actually involves mercury? Now you do, and [you know what mercury](#) can do.

The bottom line about soda is that there is nothing whatsoever that is nutritionally beneficial for you, not in any way, shape or form. Not only is there nothing to offer nutritionally, you may forget that just like tea, coffee or alcohol, sodas are diuretics. That means that sodas are NOT refreshing or hydrating. In fact, just the opposite as they can lead to dehydration, particularly if you never drink anything but soda.

So Diet Sodas Really Aren't Better For Me?

No, diet sodas really aren't better for you, and in fact, they most likely are worse. A 2017 study found that diet sodas sweetened with artificial sweeteners were associated with increased Alzheimer's risk, dementia and ischemic stroke. And a [more recent study](#) that was published in JAMA Internal Medicine found people who drink two diet sodas a day are more likely to die from a circulatory disease. Overall, those study participants were also found to have increased mortality. This was when compared to those who had one diet soda or less a month.

A [2017 study](#) published in Stroke found that, among over 3,000 participants, an increase in artificially sweetened soda consumption was associated with an increased risk of Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and ischemic stroke.

Most recently, [a 2019 study](#) published in JAMA Internal Medicine, found that those who drink two diet sodas a day are more likely to die from circulatory diseases, as well as increased mortality overall, compared to those who had one diet soda or less a month.

Not to mention that [studies also show](#) that diet sodas increase your cravings for sugars and sweets. This may mean you consume more calories in general, and this can lead to obesity. Pretty ironic when you think about how many people drink diet sodas to help them with weight loss or because they have diabetes. This is just not sound logic, sadly.

[Preliminary studies](#) have found that artificial sweeteners, including stevia (gasp) may alter your gut bacteria. This means that diet sodas, or even some sodas' naturally sweetened,' can impact your gut's microbiome. This can mean you'll have an alteration to your digestion and hormone regulation, though to be fair, the impact these have on your overall health hasn't been fully studied or confirmed.

impact these have on your overall health hasn't been fully studied or confirmed.

But seriously. When you work [so hard on getting good gut flora](#), do you want to mess it up with a diet soda?

While we're talking about what else may be damaged, a 2017 study published in the [Clinical Journal of the American Society of Nephrology](#) showed that those who consume diet soda have higher risks of kidney disease. Dieticians will tell you that long-term consumption of diet soda can affect the production of free radicals in renal tissues, and this may do some serious damage to your kidneys.

And while you may think you're saving your teeth by drinking diet soda because there is no sugar in it, guess what else it does have? Ingredients like phosphoric acid, citric acid and tartaric acid. These lead to the erosion of your teeth enamel at about the same rate that regular soda will, and neither is good for your pearly whites.

But I Don't Drink Soda; I Drink Energy Drinks

Okay, okay...you stay away from soda, but your daily energy drink is what fuels your life. Hate to tell you this, but you're going to need to take another look at that energy drink too because odds are? It's giving you energy but at great cost to your overall health.

According to the [World Health Organization](#), energy drinks are not much better than soda when it comes to your health. Energy drinks are caffeine-driven, and can lead to caffeine overdose. Yes, you can overdose on caffeine; you'll have heart palpitations, nausea, vomiting, high blood pressure and even death in some severe cases.

And [high caffeine consumption reduces insulin sensitivity](#), which can lead to Type 2 Diabetes. Because the caffeine in energy drinks can affect a woman's insulin sensitivity, you may also see higher levels of obesity, despite their often 'fit' lifestyles.

For women who are pregnant, high caffeine consumption has been linked to low birthweight, late miscarriages and stillbirths, and in children, high caffeine levels have been associated with neurological and cardiovascular effects.

Are Carbonated Waters Better Than Sodas?

In a few words, yes...mostly. There's still not a ton of research out (though it's growing) but for the most part, [researchers agree that 'sparkling' waters hydrate you as much as still water does](#). Essentially it's just because carbonated water is just water that's infused with carbon gas for the bubble effect.

Because the bubbles make you feel fuller, though, like you might with a soda, you may not drink as much, though. This means that if you are drinking carbonated waters/sparkling waters as a replacement for regular water as hydration, you may be off-track. A [sports medicine study found](#) that if all you have to drink on hand after a workout was carbonated water, you may be less likely to hydrate after your workout. That said...[another study found](#) that kids who lived in homes with home carbonation systems like SodaStream or Drinkmate were actually better hydrated than kids who didn't have them.

"But what about that one brand stealing my calcium and my tooth enamel?" Well, there is good news in that drinking sparkling water has not been found to affect calcium levels at all, but [a study DID find](#) women who drank sugary sodas every day had lower bone density mineral than those who didn't drink sodas daily. So there's that.

But when it comes to how sparkling water can affect your tooth enamel, there is something to be said about looking at what ingredients come in the sparkling drink you're drinking. Carbonic acid is a byproduct of carbon gas and water, and it's what gives water the bright and tangy taste. Some studies have found that over a long time, carbonic acid can have a mild erosive effect on your teeth. When you drink sparkling drinks that are flavored with citrus, you may be adding small amounts of citric acid and that can add to possible erosion.

That all said, the acids in non-sugary sparkling drinks are so weak, compared to plain sparkling water, the damage is minimal. Consider [a study that found soda was about 100 times MORE damaging](#) to your teeth than sparkling water, and this is where **moderation** about sugary sparkling water makes more sense!

So, what do we recommend when you're looking for the best soda alternatives?

Well, plain sparkling water is an easy answer, and can often meet the needs for a cold, carbonated drink.

But we're going to be real...mostly because we get it. Sometimes you want to feel like you're drinking something similar to a soda, but don't want the damaging effects of the soda. We get you, **because we are you**, and that's why we've found some of the **best soda alternatives**.

[DRY Sparkling Botanical Bubbly](#)



DRY Sparkling Botanical bubbly drinks are culinary-inspired, non-alcoholic drinks that make you happy. With only four ingredients, they're meant to be a zero-guilt, zero-proof delicious cocktail. There are eight flavors--our favorites are Cucumber, Watermelon and Lavender, and they're all Non-GMO, caffeine-free, gluten-free, kosher, sodium-free and OU certified. Oh, and delicious!

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[H2r0se](#)



Check these babies out! Rose Water and Saffron infused drinks that do more than just refresh! Their ingredients help calm you and make your skin glow, and even promote better sleep and fluid retention for better hydration. It's real rose water, and hydrates while giving some health benefits in a delicious taste at the same time. No compromising on flavor. What soda?

[Shop Now](#)

[Frozen Garden Fusions](#)



So if you're looking to hydrate, but water is just not your gig, we get it. That's why we love Frozen Garden Fusions! They're handcrafted with 100% real fruit and herbs and frozen into a single-serve "cube," and super easy for you to infuse water or sparkling water if you have a carbonator. There's no powder or added sugar, and each flavor comes in a resealable package with 12 fusions. The fun flavors include strawberry-lemon-basil, orange-pineapple-rosemary (our fave!) and lemon-pineapple-ginger, and they're PERFECT for flavoring carbonated water without the junk! Offering a convenient way for consumers to infuse tap water or carbonated water, without added sugar or processed powders.

[Shop Now](#)

[Mad Tasty](#)



So...here's a fun little find we can't get enough of! Mad Tasty is an all-natural, hydrating, restorative beverage with 20MG of hemp-extract with a flavor that's shockingly good. We won't lie; at first, we were a little unsure, but man. It tastes great, gave us focus and initiative without the crazy heart palpitations of an energy drink and we loved how it was like drinking a soda but way better!

Minna Lightly Brewed Sparkling Tea



We love these alternatives to soda--there are so [many health benefits to tea](#), and Minna Lightly Brewed Sparkling Teas are like the best of both worlds--cool and refreshing carbonation with delicious and lightly brewed but powerfully flavored tea.

Waterloo Sparkling Waters



There's tons of flavored sparkling waters on the market, so it's probably pretty hard to find your fave. We were digging Waterloo Sparkling Waters, as they are made with flavors that sort of remind us of drinking pop with our grandparents when we were little. There are no calories, sugar, sodium, or artificial flavors and the Black Cherry, Grape and Strawberry remind you of an old-school soda shop! Love!

Shop Now

Teatulia Organic Tea Soda



We came across these delicious Tea Sodas at Natural Products East and fell in love. The organic teas have distinctive notes of herbs and fruits, mixed with a bitsy bit of sugar and the perfect amount of fizz. And, we love that there are non-caffeinated versions of delicious that are easy to access and reasonably priced. They use ethically sourced ingredients to quench your thirst and give you a bit of a natural burst of energy, and for an organic drink? You can't beat it!

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Photo: Fotos593/Shutterstock



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HOME LIFESTYLE FOOD & DRINK

The 9 Best Sparkling Water Brands and How They're Different From Seltzer

By Sarah Morlock June 13, 2020

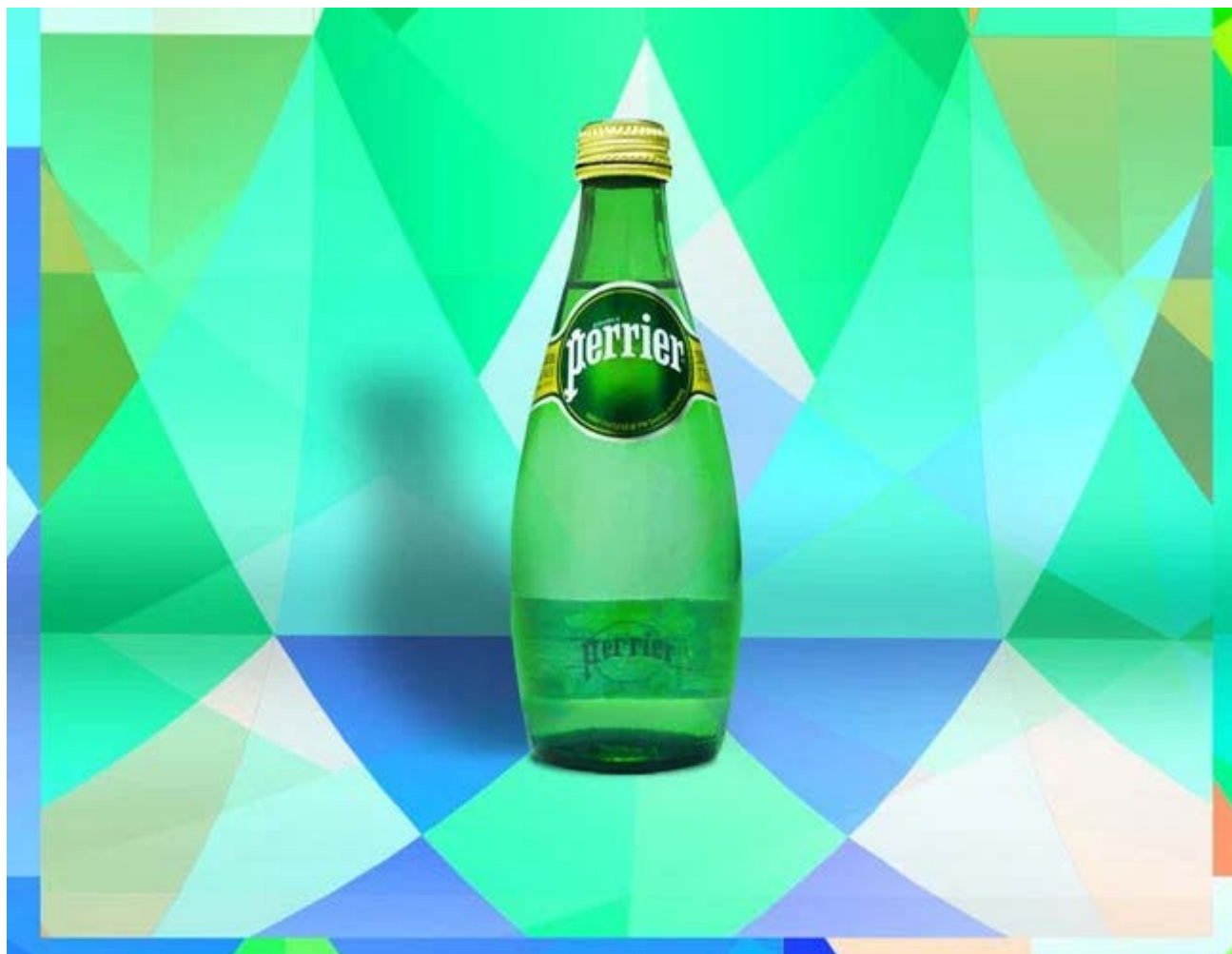


Image courtesy of Perrier

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Over the past two decades, there has been an enormous shift in the American beverage industry toward healthier sodas. Of course, this can be seen in the diet soda and flavored water trends, but where it's most evident is in the huge spike in [sparkling water sales](#).

Americans want all the fizz without any of the guilt, and sparkling water delivers on that. Most brands boast zero sugar, zero calories and zero carbs.

Where once Perrier and San Pellegrino dominated the sparkling water market, today a plethora of brands are capitalizing on the boom. Some sell plain sparkling water as a palate refresher, while others focus on flavors. Still others produce their beverages with cocktails in mind.

Yet, while sparkling water is more popular than ever, there remains a huge confusion for consumers. The terms sparkling water, seltzer, club soda and tonic water among others are often used interchangeably. Even government regulations add to this confusion by not providing clear limits and differences. But, each one should have its own place on the shelf.

SPARKLING WATER VS. SELTZER VS. CLUB SODA VS. TONIC WATER

Before we go any further, let's break down the differences between sparkling water, seltzer, club soda and [tonic water](#).

SPARKLING WATER

Sparkling water is a beverage bottled from a natural source, often a spring. Often, the bubbles in sparkling water are naturally occurring; however, there is some allowance for sparkling water brands to add carbonation. What really sets sparkling water apart from the other types of carbonated water is that it contains natural minerals and salts. [According to the FDA](#), this type of beverage must come from a protected underground water source and contain at least 250 parts per million of minerals. These minerals give sparkling water a subtly tangy flavor, and it can be consumed on its own as a palate refresher.

Sparkling water can also be called mineral water, sparkling mineral water, bubbly water or carbonated water.

SELTZER

Seltzer on the other hand is pure, filtered water with added carbon dioxide to create carbonation. It contains no minerals or salts, and because of this, it doesn't have any of the acidity often found in sparkling water. Seltzer is a common cocktail ingredient due to the fact that it has very little flavor but adds a nice fizz.

CLUB SODA

Club soda is a seltzer with minerals or salts added to mimic the taste of sparkling water. Sometimes called soda water, certain brands of club soda can be quite salty due to the additives. However, it's popularly drunk on its own, without any flavors or mix-ins. It can also be added to cocktails or substituted in recipes that call for sparkling water.

TONIC WATER

[Tonic water](#) has the most unique taste of all four carbonated waters discussed here. It's essentially carbonated water to which quinine, a compound once used to treat malaria, has

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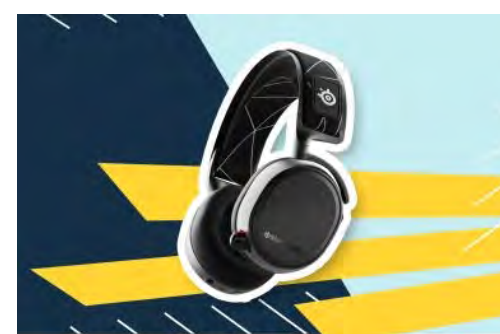
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been added. The result is a bitter beverage to which most brands add a fair amount of sugar for a more balanced taste. Tonic water is a popular cocktail ingredient, although it can be enjoyed without a mix-in as well.

Now that we've cleared up the difference between sparkling water, seltzer, club soda and [tonic water](#), read on to discover the nine best sparkling water brands on the market.

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1. PERRIER

BEST OVERALL

There's just something about ordering Perrier in a restaurant that makes you feel fancy. We get it, but the appeal of this beverage goes beyond its name. Bottled in Vergèze, France, the original version of this beverage is crisp and slightly carbonated, giving it a smooth taste from start to finish. Today, you can buy many different flavors of Perrier, and this natural lime option is one of the best. It's made using zero sweeteners and therefore has zero calories. Mix up a refreshing lime sparkling water cocktail or enjoy it straight out of the can on a warm summer day.



Image courtesy of Amazon

BUY: PERRIER LIME FLAVORED CARBONATED MINERAL WATER **\$21.87**

BUY IT

2. SPINDRIFT

BEST NATURALLY FLAVORED

While Spindrift doesn't make plain sparkling water, it does make some of the best naturally flavored sparkling water out there. That's because this company uses natural flavors created using real fruit grown in the USA. For example, their Spindrift Cranberry Raspberry Sparkling Water is made with Massachusetts cranberries and raspberries from the Pacific Northwest for a perfectly tart to sweet ratio. The brand also produces 10 other flavors for all your refreshment and cocktail needs.



BUY: SPINDRIFT CRANBERRY RASPBERRY SPARKLING WATER \$2.50

BUY IT

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3. SAN PELLEGRINO

BEST UNFLAVORED

In blind taste tests, many people claim to prefer San Pellegrino versus Perrier. The main difference in taste is that San Pellegrino has slightly more fizz than Perrier, which is the main reason people choose to drink sparkling water after all. Bottled at San Pellegrino Terme, Bergamo, Italy, this beverage has been used for years to cleanse palates across Italy and amplify the magnificent flavors of Italian food and wine. As an added bonus, the naturally sparkling water is low in sodium and has zero calories.



Image courtesy of Drizly

BUY: SAN PELLEGRINO SPARKLING WATER \$2.79

BUY IT

4. RECESS

MOST UNIQUE

Certainly not traditional, Recess has infused sparkling water with hemp and adaptogens. The goal of this experiment was to create a drink that replaces your two o'clock coffee to make you feel "not tired and not wired." The brand chose to use hemp for its calming effects, while the included adaptogens help improve focus, enhance memory and brighten moods. Like some other sparkling water makers in the American market, Recess has chosen not to create a plain version of its product and instead has focused on flavors like pomegranate hibiscus and coconut lime.

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Image courtesy of Drizly

BUY: RECESS HEMP WATER POMEGRANATE HIBISCUS **\$5.98** [BUY IT](#)

5. LA CROIX

MOST POPULAR

Although you may not realize it, your favorite La Croix is actually sparkling water. In 2015, La Croix cautiously entered a crowded sparkling water market, but it quickly became a roaring success. In just a few years, the beverage has been elevated from a relatively ugly can on the supermarket shelf to the “Drink of the Millennials.” Part of the sparkling water’s success comes down to the fact that La Croix is completely free from sugar, calories and preservatives. And, with so many [different flavors](#) to choose from, you’re sure to find one you adore.

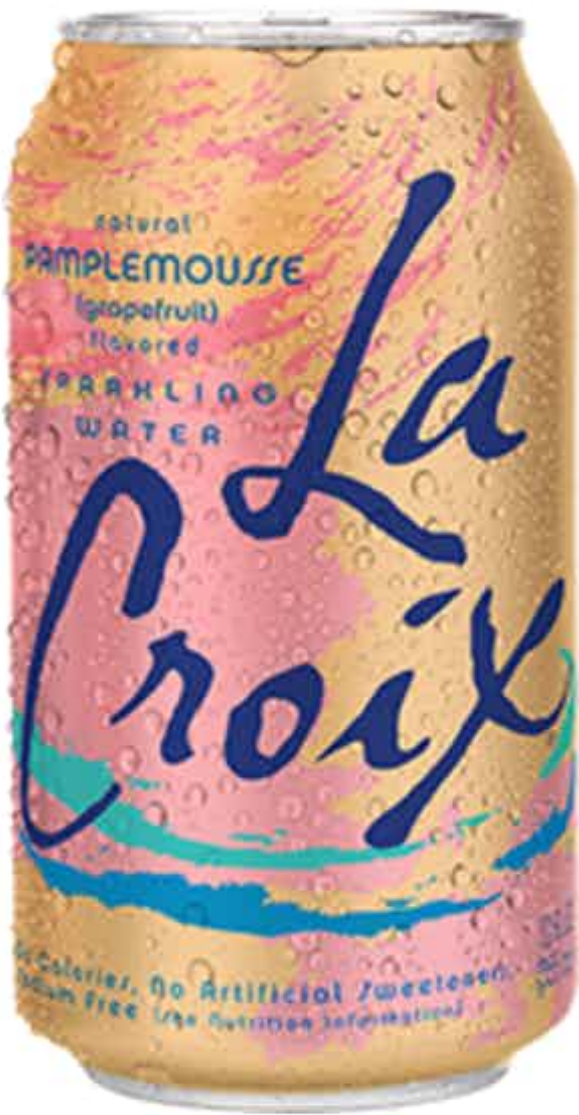


Image courtesy of Drizly

BUY: LA CROIX PAMPLEMOUSSE PINK GRAPEFRUIT **\$6.04** [BUY IT](#)

6. BUBLY

BEST FLAVORS

The number one competitor of La Croix packs a punch of its own. Bubly is a flavored sparkling water brand that makes beverages with no calories using no sweeteners. You might have seen their recent ad campaign featuring Michael Buble, who ostensibly approves of the canned

drink. Bubly comes in 15 different flavors, ranging from grapefruit to watermelon, and is a good mixer for quick summer cocktails, like cherry sparkling water and vodka or blueberry-pomegranate and gin.

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Image courtesy of Drizly

BUY: BUBLY GRAPEFRUIT SPARKLING WATER **\$9.99** [BUY IT](#)

7. SPARKLING ICE

BEST CAFFEINATED

While sparkling water is a great diet replacement for soda, it lacks more than just calories. Because of its natural nature, sparkling water isn't caffeinated like many other fizzy beverages. If you need your daily fix but want to switch to a healthier beverage, consider Sparkling Ice + Caffeine Triple Citrus. This flavored version of the Sparkling Ice original, non-flavored sparkling water, packs a lemon-lime punch with zero sugar and zero carbs. But, it's real magic comes in the form of the 70mg of caffeine in each can. Plus, Sparkling Ice + Caffeine is available in five other flavors if citrus isn't your favorite taste.



Image courtesy of Amazon

BUY: SPARKLING ICE PLUS CAFFEINE TRIPLE CITRUS **\$16.90** [BUY IT](#)

8. Topo Chico

BEST BUBBLES

Topo Chico Mineral Water has a cult-like following. Just scroll through the reviews, and you'll find people who swear they only drink Topo Chico having eschewed all other beverages. Many cite the intense bubbles as the main reason behind their addiction, but the iconic, throwback packaging doesn't hurt either. Topo Chico Mineral Water is bottled from the spring at Cerro del

Topo Chico in a tradition that dates back to 1895. This particular order is for several one-and-a-half liter bottles, but this mineral water is also available in individual glass bottles.

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BUY: TOPO CHICO MINERAL WATER **\$17.38** [BUY IT](#)

9. CLEARLY CANADIAN

BEST SPLURGE

A personal favorite of the author, Clearly Canadian used to be a supermarket mainstay in the 1990's. Unfortunately, corporate mismanagement at the turn of the century meant production was halted, but in the last two years, the company has once again found its feet and just recently began distributing again in the USA. Clean and crisp, Clearly Canadian pulls off flavored sparkling water without making the beverage sickeningly sweet. Each bottle has just four, all-natural ingredients, namely carbonated spring water sourced in Canada, pure cane sugar, vegan fruit flavoring and citric acid for increased shelf life.



BUY: CLEARLY CANADIAN SPARKLING SPRING WATER BEVERAGE **\$29.99** [BUY IT](#)

10. WATERLOO

BEST MIXER

If you're looking to add your sparkling water to a cocktail or mocktail recipe, Waterloo is a great option. Each can has zero calories, grams of sugar or sodium and is verified non-GMO. The flavors are delicious on their own as well as mixed in with other ingredients. They include blueberry, juicy watermelon, muddled black cherry, grape, strawberry, mango, coconut, zesty grapefruit and original. You have a wide range of fruits to choose from, each one of which starts out bright but finishes on a true-fruit flavor finish that's authentic and not fake in the least. They have ingredients and quality you can trust, and come in 8 or 12-pack fridge-ready cases so stocking up is easy.

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Courtesy of Amazon

BUY: WATERLOO SPARKLING WATER BLUEBERRY 12-PACK
\$14.49

BUY IT

SPIKED SELTZER IS THE UNOFFICIAL DRINK OF THE DECADE AND IT'S NO SURPRISE WHY

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Social Impact Heroes: Why & How Jason Shiver of Waterloo Sparkling Water Is Helping To Change Our World



Yitzi Weiner [Follow](#)
Jan 17 · 9 min read



Challenge your team to think differently.

To maintain your competitive edge, you need to think outside of the box. Almost anything can be copied, so how do you keep a moat around your brand? Working to keep our brand differentiated is our challenge every day.

As part of my series about “individuals and organizations making an important social impact”, I had the pleasure of interviewing Jason Shiver.

Jason Shiver has served as CEO of Waterloo Sparkling Water since August 2017. Prior to Waterloo, Mr. Shiver held several positions at SkinnyPop/Amplify snack brands from May 2013 to January 2017, including President of North America prior to his departure. He was instrumental in helping take the company public in August of 2015 and won awards from both Nielsen and IRI for SkinnyPop’s performance. From 2008 to 2013, Mr. Shiver served as Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Glutino USA, a gluten free snack food company, which was acquired by Boulder Brands, Inc, a diversified food company. From May 2003 to January 2008, Mr. Shiver held several roles at Atkins Nutritionals, Inc, the leader in low carb food and beverages, including Vice President of Sales. From September 2001 to May 2003, Mr. Shiver was a Southeast Regional Sales Manager at Acirca, Inc, an organic foods and beverages company. From August 2000 to September 2001, Mr. Shiver was a National Account Manager at AriZona Beverages USA LLC. Mr. Shiver holds a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from University of South Florida.

Thank you so much for doing this with us! Can you tell us a story about what brought you to this specific career path?

I wish I could romanticize the story by telling you I have always dreamed of being in the better-for-you food space, but it was more practical. I had just graduated college and had worked full-time for Sam’s Club as I put

myself through school. AriZona Iced Tea offered me an opportunity to be a sales person at their Tampa, Florida distribution facility. It wasn't glamorous. I was essentially throwing cases of tea on the shelves of retailers across the Pinellas County area. Over the course of the next several years, I was promoted multiple times until I was a National Account Manager for some of AriZona's largest customers. This is where I developed the entrepreneurial spirit that followed me into the low-carb craze (Atkins), Organics (Walnut Acres), Gluten Free (Glutino), better-for-you snacks (SkinnyPop) and now, sparkling water with Waterloo. I was seemingly always one of the youngest people in the room, but was given a large voice in smaller organizations. Today, let's just say I have become one of the more "experienced" people in the room.

Can you share the most interesting story that happened to you since you began leading your company or organization?

Early on, as we started to hear people from all walks of life around the country talk about Waterloo, we were wowed. We were all holding our collective breaths that our hard work and determination would pay off. Waterloo is an interpretation of what our team felt a better-for-you sparkling water should taste like. Fast forward to today, we send out a monthly Loo Love report that outlines the comments our most loyal consumers spent the time to send. It reinforces to our team that we are making a difference.

Can you share a story about the funniest mistake you made when you were first starting? Can you tell us what lesson you learned from that?

I think this was a question from a previous interview I have done with Medium, but a good one nonetheless. It was during the early days of Waterloo, just after we launched at Whole Foods Market. We received a call from the Costco San Diego buyer requesting to set up an appointment to discuss Waterloo with her. You can imagine the excitement that permeated our small, young team. This is the thrill of the chase in the early days of starting a company. We nailed down a time and I flew to San Diego full of hope. As my regional salesperson and I sat outside the buying office for two hours strategizing, we had no idea what was happening inside the building. We confidently entered the buying office and told the receptionist our name and who we were there to see. She informed us that we were two hours late for the meeting. Needless to say, my heart was in my throat and I was thinking of all the excuses I was going to use when I got back to Austin. Somehow, the "magic" that is supposed to happen when you change time zones with Outlook had me thinking the meeting was two hours later than it was. Fortunately, the buyer stayed late and met with us. We eventually earned her business and I consider her a friend. Thank you, Debbie!

Can you describe how you or your organization is making a significant social impact?

What we do at Waterloo, we do because we think it's the right thing to do — whether we tell the world about it or not. Internally, we discuss ways to help and deploy funds and resources to help where we can. That could be through the donation of nearly a million cans to first responders or working with the University of Texas on their intern diversity program. In the news we just announced, we are focusing on helping to address the financial struggles facing small businesses. My wife and I have always been present in the Austin food and entertainment scene. Many of these business owners/employees are customers of Waterloo, and more importantly, friends. We discussed making a donation to help those in the service industry back in April. At the time, in the early days of the pandemic, we could not find an efficient way to get cash in the hands of these great people. Last month, we noticed what the [Barstool Fund](#) was doing and reached out to Erika Nardini (CEO of Barstool Sports), wanting to make a personal donation. When I shared this with my executive committee, they also wanted to step up for small businesses. This was the genesis of our new employee benefit that provides each employee with a monthly \$200 allowance to spend with local, small businesses in their communities. We budgeted this for the entire 2021 calendar year.

Can you tell us a story about a particular individual who was impacted or helped by your cause?

I would direct people to [The Barstool Fund](#) | [Barstool Sports](#) website to watch the videos of how lives are being changed each day. Many of these very successful business owners are faced with losing everything through

no fault of their own. If our efforts as a company inspire other companies to implement similar programs, or if spreading the word of the great work from the folks at Barstool Sports inspires others to donate, then we are improving the lives of people one day at a time. Through this new employee benefit launched this month, our 35 employees are helping small businesses in 11 states.

Are there three things the community/society/politicians can do to help you address the root of the problem you are trying to solve?

We believe it is important for individuals in their daily lives to make a conscious effort to patronize the small businesses in their communities. Through no fault of their own in this COVID time, small business owners are facing dire challenges. We can make a difference with decisions we make throughout our day. As an entrepreneur myself, it has been heartbreaking to see so many members of our community, many I consider friends, watch their livelihoods evaporate. We can all help

We also are looking for fellow business leaders in Austin and in cities around the country to use their voices, ingenuity and resources to support these struggling small business owners. That is the motivation behind our new employee benefit to support this essential sector of our economy — one that is critical to driving innovation and bringing vitality to the communities where we live.

How do you define “Leadership”? Can you explain what you mean or give an example?

As an organization, we would define leadership as having the courage to think differently and to act, in order to make a positive impact on your business and community. I believe that our new, small business benefit is a clear example of leadership in action.

What are your “5 things I wish someone told me when I first started” and why. Please share a story or example for each.

- Stay true to your values.

To enhance corporate culture, establish corporate values and hire people that embody those values. Culture should be easy if you follow this principal. Approximately 70% of my team has worked with me at least one other time.

- Following other brands is not authentic, it is the opposite.

Either be the category leader, or challenge the status quo by bringing positive change to a category through differentiated attributes.

- Lead from the front and listen.

We spent countless hours reading reviews of other products before we launched Waterloo. One thing I can tell you is that if a customer spends the time to leave a review, they are passionate about what they are saying. This led us to distinguish ourselves not only by taste, but also by bringing a more elevated experience to the consumer when they open a can of Waterloo Sparkling Water.

- Challenge your team to think differently.

To maintain your competitive edge, you need to think outside of the box. Almost anything can be copied, so how do you keep a moat around your brand? Working to keep our brand differentiated is our challenge every day.

- Don’t get too caught up in what is happening today — keep your eye on the prize.

I have seen brands make short-term decisions that affect their ability to achieve their long-term goals. Focus on how the big decisions you make will affect the future of your brand. Don’t give up the long term for a short-term gain.

You are a person of enormous influence. If you could inspire a movement that would bring the most amount of good to the most amount of people, what would that be? You never know what your idea can trigger. :-)

This is a big question. I believe that it takes all of us. When people tap into their individual passions and act in good faith, we can all, collectively, get to a better place. For me, I have been moved by the struggles of small business owners. I have chosen to lend my voice and our brand’s resources to this cause. Austin is a city of entrepreneurship and independent thinking, and we lean hard into doing the right thing — the foundation that Waterloo has been built upon. In this spirit — staying true to Waterloo’s brand values — we have encouraged other business leaders in Austin and beyond to lock arms with us to help the small business community, which is a vital sector of our economy and essential to driving innovation.

Can you please give us your favorite “Life Lesson Quote”? Can you share how that was relevant to you in your life?

It’s not how many times you get knocked down, it’s how many times you get back up. Life is difficult and we have to have the perseverance to get back up and the tenacity to succeed. I have always worked with early/pre-revenue brands that have to believe they can be the challenger brand in the category. This takes a delicate blend of unwavering belief, tenacity, and perseverance. Success does not come easy.

Is there a person in the world, or in the US with whom you would like to have a private breakfast or lunch with, and why? He or she might just see this, especially if we tag them. :-)

Tom Brady. Love him or hate him, you have to respect what he’d accomplished. What are those unwavering traits that have made him so successful? How does he find success in the face of defeat?

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